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ABSTRACT

Collaborative research maximizes the use of both physical and human resources in education. Benefits to the cooperating institutions (public schools and universities) are improvements in facilities, costs, programs, delivery services, climate, and training. Collaborative research eliminates the separation between the generation of knowledge and its application in the instructional setting. By collaborating on research from its inception to its conclusion, school personnel may find that both the experience and the results attained are practical. Benefits of collaborative research are found in the process itself which enhances skills of individuals on the research team. "Research for the sake of research" no longer exists. University researchers find acceptance by the schools and have a field laboratory for study. Research results are made viable and meaningful as they are applied in the school setting. Both the process and the product of collaborative research can have immediate and long-term positive impact. It can provide the vehicle for development of added research and leadership skills of university and school personnel while also enhancing the educational program. (Author/GK)

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OLD ADVERSARIES UNITED: BENEFITS OF COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

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Collaborative research, a challenging method of investigating problems of concern to educators, is an efficient way for both school personnel and university researchers to work together to reach mutual objectives and build individual skills. It is a productive vehicle for institutions to maximize their resources and to derive benefits in terms of new or revised programs; provision of services to parents, students and the community; and staff development. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the potential benefits of collaborative research between public schools and the university as they apply to these cooperating institutions and their respective staffs.

It is difficult for school personnel and university researchers to agree on objectives for research, although their goal is actually the same: generating research for improving the education of individuals. Often, collaborative research is hindered by differing perspectives of school and university personnel about the objectives of school-based research. School personnel resist the conduct of research in the schools because it seems intrusive and is perceived as both impractical and tangential to school operations. Teachers and school administrators tend to desire concrete solutions to immediate problems, while university researchers tend to be interested in the process of research. Some university researchers are reluctant to enlist the cooperation of school personnel in the collection of data for research projects which they perceive are little understood or appreciated by those personnel.

The Relationship of Leadership and Research.

Based on the common goal of improving the education of individuals, the school and university educators can exercise leadership roles through research activities. Before research strategies can be planned, two actions need to be taken. First, key personnel in cooperating institutions must be identified. Second, the credibility of the researcher(s) must be established. They must have a reputation of conducting research cooperatively within the schools; of being fair and equitable; of delivering what is promised; and of producing what is desired.

Jacobson has suggested the relationship between utilizing research results and leadership by stating that:

> "Leadership is the activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group objectives; and leadership is influencing people to follow in the achieving of a common goal."[1]

The specific functions of leadership are exercised as research results are implemented in the classroom/campus setting and also as results are disseminated or used in the university community to generate other related research efforts. Leadership roles are strengthened as an inherent by-product of any collaborative research effort.

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1. Jacobsen, J.J. *Education Today: Where Are the Leaders to Guide the Schools?* NASSP Bulletin, 64 (440), December 1980, page 47.

Through conscientious planning, the participants can assure that internal consistency occurs and a system of checks and balances is followed. While the research is being conducted, the investigators should meet periodically with each other to check procedures, instruments, and progress to date. This will assure that what has been planned does, in fact, occur.

By participating in research from its very inception, school personnel and researchers can monitor the purposes, methods, and outcomes as suggested by Klausmeier who stated that:

> ".... the method of inquiry in practical research is deliberative. It deals with both means and end. Involvement and experience on the part of the researcher are regarded as necessary for generating the relevant information and alternatives for dealing both with the means and the ends.....novel alternatives are generated from study carried out in the immediate situation."[2]

There must be a correlation between school-based research and educational outcomes. Specifically, collaborative research provides opportunities for the university and the local school to explore problem areas through:

1. The development of joint strategies to study areas of common interest. The purposes of the research effort are to explain relationships, to test hypotheses, to solve problems or to remedy situations.

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2. Klausmeier, J.J. *A Research Strategy for Educational Improvement,* Invited address presented at the 1981 AERA Annual Meeting, L.A., California, April 15, 1981, NIE Grant #OB-NIE-G-81-0009, page 8.

2. The development of data bases from which school-based staff can formulate educational policy(ies) and operational procedures by using research results for evolving educational programs and services.
3. The development of personnel and the complementary use of institutional resources in accomplishing mutual objectives. Collaborative research efforts maximize limited physical, monetary and human resources of both institutions.

Benefits of Collaborative Research.

Figure I provides a conceptual model of the benefits which can accrue to each of three constituencies: the school, the university and the respective participating individuals. Readers will note that these benefits are parallel. For example, the benefits to schools emerge from the utilization of findings to institute new programs or procedures, while the same findings can be used by the university for curriculum review. Simultaneously, the skills needed by the individuals involved would be reflected in their ability to extrapolate applications from the findings.

FIGURE I: CORRESPONDING BENEFITS TO SCHOOLS, UNIVERSITIES, AND INDIVIDUALS

PARTICIPATING IN COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

	Benefits to Schools	Benefits to Universities	Benefits to Individuals
1.	Institute new instructional programs or administrative procedures	Provide information for curriculum/requirement review	Facilitate new programs development based on research information
2.	Develop student/parent services based on research results	Develop research centers to provide consultant services	Project plans as identified by needs assessment
3.	Identify areas which need revision - policies, methods objectives	Generate new hypotheses from findings	Analyze data to generate policy recommendations
4.	Revise instructional programs	Improve teacher training programs	Provide program direction through improved decision making skills
5.	Extrapolate practical applications of research data	Test solutions to problems in the field	Utilize problem solving techniques
6.	Acquire information for staff training and public information programs	Develop training programs for school personnel	Disseminate effective communications and communicate effectively
7.	Involve students/staff in extended classroom experiences	Participate in community service activity	Provide publicity through professional presentations
8.	Utilize research results in decision making	Apply research findings to new situations or in new settings	Apply data to program administration
9.	Influence affective/cognitive learning environment	Survey a climate for productive research	Practice effective group process techniques
10.	Development of instructional models for future use	Obtain access to naturalistic settings for research purposes	Develop interpersonal skills by interaction with other professionals
11.	Acquire a cadre of professionals with expanded research skills	Produce research leading to papers, symposia, grant proposals, and training activities	Acquire skills to become a resource and utilize other resources

Although there are benefits of collaborative research to the university and to individuals engaged in the collaboration, the most important benefits are to schools and school personnel who can use results to make critical decisions related to programs and resource allocation. Boards, administrative staff, teachers, and students benefit from the research effort when results are reflected through policy analysis, curriculum improvement, and inservice program design. Ultimately, the schools' greatest benefit is the utilization of research results to enhance the students' academic achievement and psychosocial growth.

Benefits to the university parallel those to the schools. They are related to its three major goals: to provide service to the community, to educate students, and to conduct research. The conduct of research of service to the community provides data for use in decision making. This also fulfills the second goal, which is the improvement of education for students. Collaboration enhances the ability of practitioners in conducting research, generating new research, and disseminating and applying research findings. It should be stressed that collaboration between the schools and the university eliminates duplication of services and facilities. Libraries, computers, records, funds and institutional expertise can all be shared.

Individuals engaged in the research process enhance their own skills and provide a cadre of trained professionals to their respective institutions. By increasing the skills of staff, new leadership is encouraged which will guide the institutions in more creative directions.

> "The (administrator) approaches the school with charged anticipation, knowing it can be a place of creative endeavor, a laboratory for improved education. Once creative instinct becomes a part of the work, then the learning environment will be improved...."[3]

An essential requirement of the process is that the researcher and cooperating district be able to "see" the results impact on the school setting.

The skills necessary for collaborative research are not limited to either institution. During the course of the collaboration, school personnel and university researchers develop a sustained professional relationship in which team members serve as role models for one another. The group process allows individuals to develop personal skills in non-threatening settings by creating an interaction that is positive, creative and synergistic. Members of the team have the opportunity to develop problem solving, relating, and extrapolating skills. The key component in the development of these personal skills is cooperation in which the team and its members function as a unit with a purpose. Decisions negotiated on the basis of research, planning, and analysis are made in order to facilitate the pursuit of the mutually accepted goals of the team and of the research effort.

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3. Southerland, T.P. *The Creative Principal.* NASSP Bulletin, 64 (433), February 1980, page 3.

Summary:

Collaborative research maximizes the use of both physical and human resources in education. Benefits to the cooperating institutions are improvements in facilities, costs, programs, delivery services, climate, and training. Collaborative research eliminates the separation between the generation of knowledge and its application in the instructional setting.

By collaborating on research from its inception to its conclusion, school personnel may find that both the experience and the results attained are practical.

> "An educational leader, if convinced that an improvement or change is needed, must involve others in the selection for results; communicate expectations clearly; monitor the effort, but delegate responsibility; and expand and extend the process."[4]

Benefits of collaborative research are found in the process itself which enhances skills of individuals on the research team. "Research for the sake of research" no longer exists. University researchers find acceptance by the schools and have a field laboratory for study. Research results are made viable and meaningful as they are applied in the school setting. Both the process and the product of collaborative research can have immediate and long-term positive impact. It can provide the vehicle for development of added research and leadership skills of university and school personnel while also enhancing the educational program.

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4. Jacobsen, J.J. *Education Today: Where Are the Leaders to Guide the Schools?* NASSP Bulletin, 64 (440), December 1980, page 48.

Collaborative research is beneficial, productive, and meaningful because it facilitates agreement between cooperating institutions on the objectives of research.

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